

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

10/655,857

Examiner

George L. Walton

Applicant(s)

JOHNSON ET AL.

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to the interview summary and the examiner's amendment.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-26.
3. ☒ The drawings filed on 05 September 2003 are accepted by the Examiner.
4. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

5. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
 6. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
7. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☒ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date 6/4/04
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit
of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date 8/2/04
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☐ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____.

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EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Mr. Ryan S. Loveless on August 2, 2004.

The application has been amended as follows:

Amendments from Examiner Interview of Aug. 2, 2004

1. (Previously Presented) A gas meter valve for connection to a meter outlet of a gas meter, the gas meter valve comprising:

- a valve inlet coupleable to the meter outlet and adapted to communicate gas from the meter outlet;
- a valve outlet coupleable to piping for supplying gas to a customer and adapted to communicate gas to the piping;
- a valve body coupled to the valve inlet and the valve outlet, the valve body including:
 - a chamber for communicating gas from the valve inlet to the valve outlet; and
 - a valve assembly disposed at least partially in the chamber and adapted to:
 - prevent the communication of gas through the chamber when the valve assembly is in a first position; and

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permit the communication of gas through the chamber when the valve assembly is in a second position, wherein the valve inlet, valve outlet and valve body are arranged so as to replace an existing piping portion provided between the meter outlet of the gas meter and the piping for supplying gas to the customer; and

an actuating mechanism operably coupled to the valve assembly and adapted to position the valve assembly in the first position and the second position.

2. (Original) The gas meter valve of Claim 1, wherein the valve outlet includes a threaded inner surface and a bushing having a threaded outer surface and threaded inner surface, the threaded outer surface of the bushing adapted to receive the threaded inner surface of the valve outlet and the threaded inner surface of the bushing adapted to receive a threaded outer surface of the piping for supplying gas to the customer.

3. (Original) The gas meter valve of Claim 1, wherein the actuating mechanism includes a keyed receptacle operable to receive a tool for manipulating a position of the actuating mechanism.

4. (Original) The gas meter valve of Claim 1, wherein the actuating mechanism includes a manually operable flange mounted on an exterior of the valve body.

5. (Original) The gas meter valve of Claim 1, wherein the valve body further includes an opening extending through a portion of the valve body and the actuating mechanism further

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includes an opening extending through a portion of the actuating mechanism such that the opening through the portion of the actuating mechanism is at least partially aligned with the opening through the portion of the valve body when the actuating mechanism is operated to position the valve assembly in the first position.

6. (Original) The gas meter valve of Claim 5, wherein the opening through the portion of the valve body and the opening of the portion of the actuating mechanism are adapted to receive a tamper-proofing mechanism extendable through the openings to prevent the actuating mechanism from being operated to position the valve assembly in the second position.

7. (Original) The gas meter valve of Claim 1, wherein the valve assembly includes a ball valve assembly.

8. (Original) The gas meter valve of Claim 1, wherein the valve assembly includes a soft seat valve assembly.

9. (Original) The gas meter valve of Claim 1, wherein the valve inlet includes a swivel and swivel nut for coupling the valve inlet to the meter outlet.

10. (Previously Presented) The gas meter valve of Claim 1, wherein the existing pipe portion is an elbow.

11. (Original) The gas meter valve of Claim 1, wherein a connection of the valve inlet to the valve body is substantially perpendicular to a connection of the valve outlet to the valve body.

12. (Currently Amended) A gas supply system comprising:

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a gas meter having a meter inlet for receiving a gas supply
and a meter outlet for providing the gas supply; and
a valve including:

a valve inlet coupled to the meter outlet and adapted
to communicate gas from the meter outlet;

a valve outlet coupled to piping for supplying gas to
a customer and adapted to communicate gas to the
piping;

a valve body coupled to the valve inlet and the valve
outlet, the valve body including:

a chamber for communicating gas from the valve
inlet to the valve outlet; and

a valve assembly disposed at least partially in
the chamber and adapted to:

prevent the communication of gas through the
chamber when the valve assembly is in a
first position; and

permit the communication of gas through the
chamber when the valve assembly is in a
second position, wherein the valve
inlet, valve outlet and valve body are
arranged so as to replace an existing
piping portion provided between the
meter outlet of the gas meter and the
piping for supplying gas to the
customer, wherein a connection of the
valve inlet to the valve body is
substantially perpendicular to a
connection of the valve outlet to the
valve body; and

an actuating mechanism operably coupled to the valve assembly and adapted to position the valve assembly in the first position and the second position.

13. (Original) The gas supply system of Claim 12, wherein the valve outlet includes a threaded inner surface and a bushing having a threaded outer surface and threaded inner surface, the threaded outer surface of the bushing adapted to receive the threaded inner surface of the valve outlet and the threaded inner surface of the bushing adapted to receive a threaded outer surface of the piping for supplying gas to the customer.

14. (Original) The gas supply system of Claim 12, wherein the actuating mechanism includes a keyed receptacle operable to receive a tool for manipulating a position of the actuating mechanism.

15. (Original) The gas supply system of Claim 12, wherein the actuating mechanism includes a manually operable flange mounted on an exterior of the valve body.

16. (Original) The gas supply system of Claim 12, wherein the valve body further includes an opening extending through a portion of the valve body and the actuating mechanism further includes an opening extending through a portion of the actuating mechanism such that the opening through the portion of the actuating mechanism is at least partially aligned with the opening through the portion of the valve body when the actuating mechanism is operated to position the valve assembly in the first position.

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17. (Original) The gas supply system of Claim 16, wherein the opening through the portion of the valve body and the opening of the portion of the actuating mechanism are adapted to receive a tamper-proofing mechanism extendable through the openings to prevent the actuating mechanism from being operated to position the valve assembly in the second position.

18. (Original) The gas supply system of Claim 12, wherein the valve assembly includes a ball valve assembly.

19. (Original) The gas supply system of Claim 12, wherein the valve assembly includes a soft seat valve assembly.

20. (Original) The gas supply system of Claim 12, wherein the valve inlet includes a swivel and swivel nut for coupling the valve inlet to the meter outlet.

21. (Currently Amended) The gas supply system of Claim 12, wherein a [[the]] connection of the valve inlet to the valve body is substantially perpendicular to a [[the]] connection of the valve outlet to the valve body.

22. (Original) In a gas supply system comprising a gas meter having a meter outlet, a first piping portion operably coupled to the meter outlet and a second piping portion operably coupled to the first piping portion, a method for shutting off a gas supply to a customer while maintaining a gas supply to the gas meter, the method comprising the steps of:

disconnecting the first piping portion from the gas meter
and the second piping portion;
providing a gas meter valve comprising:

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a valve inlet coupleable to the meter outlet and adapted to communicate gas from the meter outlet;

a valve outlet coupleable to piping for supplying gas to a customer and adapted to communicate gas to the second piping portion;

a valve body coupled to the valve inlet and the valve outlet, the valve body including:

a chamber for communicating gas from the valve inlet to the valve outlet; and

a valve assembly disposed at least partially in the chamber and adapted to:

prevent the communication of gas through the chamber when the valve assembly is in a first position; and

permit the communication of gas through the chamber when the valve assembly is in a second position; and

an actuating mechanism operably coupled to the valve assembly and adapted to position the valve assembly in the first position and the second position;

connecting the valve inlet to the meter outlet;

connecting the valve outlet to the second piping portion;

and

operating the actuating mechanism to position the valve assembly in the first position to prevent a flow of gas from the meter outlet to the second piping portion.

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23. (Original) The method of Claim 22, further comprising the steps of:

detecting a leak in the second piping portion;
dispatching a gas system technician to operate the
actuating mechanism to position the valve in the first
position;
repairing the leak in the second piping portion; and
dispatching an authorized repair technician to operate the
actuating mechanism to position the valve in the
second position.

24. (Original) The method of Claim 22, wherein the first piping portion includes a riser coupled to the meter outlet, an elbow having an inlet coupled to the riser and an outlet coupled to the second piping portion.

25. (Original) The method of Claim 24, wherein an angle of a bend of the elbow is substantially 90°.

26. (Original) The method of Claim 22, wherein the valve inlet includes a swivel and swivel nut for coupling the valve inlet to the meter outlet.


Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to George L. Walton whose telephone number is 703-308-2596. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F, 8:00-4:30.

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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Dave Scherbel can be reached on 703-308-1272. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


George L. Walton
Primary Examiner
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GLW